

CITY OF LINCOLN
Cable TV Advisory Board Minutes
April 23, 2009

Members Present: Barbara Bartle, Jerrod Jaeger, Jim Johnson, Stuart Long, Jon Rehm, Art Zygielbaum

Members Absent: Donna Behlen (excused), Herb Friedman (excused), Mary Herres (unexcused), Laurie Lee (excused), Herb Schimek (unexcused)

City Staff: Steve Huggenberger, Diane Gonzolas

Representatives of Time Warner: Ann Shrewsbury, Jamie Wenz

Others: Earl L. Robinett

Chair Art Ziegelbaum called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m. Board members and guests introduced themselves. Minutes from the January 22 meeting were read. Long moved approval; Bartle seconded; motion passed 6-0.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Committees distributed paper copies of their reports; following are additional comments made as part of the record.

- **Digital Conversion**

The final report of the Digital Conversion subcommittee is ready. Shrewsbury passed out a copy of some brochures that Time-Warner Cable will be distributing about the conversion.

- **Public Comments**

The Cable Advisory Board web site is now up:
<http://www.lincoln.ne.gov/city/mayor/cic/cable.htm>
(lincoln.ne.gov keyword: cable)

- **Access Channels**

Jaeger reported that the subcommittee is looking at cable access rules. Shrewsbury will get a copy of the current rules to the subcommittee.

Shrewsbury said that one issue which the rules try to address is that some people are using their equipment training as a free form of education; they go through the training, then they don't return. Ziegelbaum suggested that maybe they could consider charging for the training, possibly a deposit that could be returned later when they start doing shows. Johnson said that it's hard to get people to stay committed to doing this kind of thing; he thinks there may be people who think in advance that they'll have time to commit to it, but decide during the training or afterwards that it's too much of a time commitment.

Wenz said that the schedule on LCC-TV is much more packed than on the Public Access channel, but he doesn't think that LCC-TV shows can be aired on Public Access under the franchise agreement.

Prior to the meeting, guest Earl Robinett had mentioned informally to some members of the committee that he had heard that Channel 10, the City's rolling announcement channel, might be going away. Gonzolas was asked to talk about this. She said that the Citizen Information Center, like other City departments, was asked to start the budget season by turning in a budget that would be set at 91% of last year. One proposal that CIC made as a possible cost savings would be to discontinue Channel 10. They have looked at other options. Huggenberger

said that Connie Guillaume spends about 10 hours per week at a minimum to update the channel. Zygielbaum asked if an intern could do the work. There are concerns about someone that is not a City employee doing the editing for the channel. Gonzolas said that cutting the channel is likely. She said that some people have called in and complained about the proposed cuts because they like using the channel to listen to KZUM; however KZUM is not part of the City so they don't have a specific right to be on the air.

- **Competitiveness**

The subcommittee distributed its final report. Johnson moved acceptance, Rehm seconded; motion passed 6-0.

OLD BUSINESS: No old business.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Digital Conversion**

We discussed the upcoming digital conversion. Shrewsbury said that there don't appear to be any major problems at this point.

Rehm asked if the Cable Advisory Board has authority to advise the City Council and the Mayor with regard to digital television. Huggenberger said that we probably don't have that authority. Rehm asked who would provide television service for people who are currently receiving over the air broadcasts but will not be able to get it after conversion. Shrewsbury said that they could sign up for cable or satellite television.

Zygielbaum said that one difference between analog and digital is that analog degrades "gracefully" as the source fades, whereas digital pixilates instead. While this is something that people might find unpleasant, he thinks that this is outside of our purview as the cable board.

Shrewsbury said that TWC has done multiple workshops on the upcoming conversion.

Long said that he thinks there will be an issue that will show up a few years down the road, when TWC may choose to stop broadcasting analog signals.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: No public comments.

TWC REPORTS

Wenz passed out copies of the Community Access Channel report.

Shrewsbury reported that two of the fifteen national winners of Teacher Awards from Time Warner Cable are from Lincoln; one from Pound Middle School and one from St Patrick's Catholic School. She says that Lincoln has a long history of using cable in the classroom. There have been 24 winners from Lincoln over the past 20 years.

Shrewsbury said that TWC is looking at changing its HD lineup. They may drop HDNet and HDMovies, due to contract difficulties, and possibly replace them with Smithsonian HD and RFD HD. They are adding a number of HD channels to their main digital tier lineup.

Shrewsbury reported that Beth Scarborough, their CEO, is retiring and moving to Georgia.

CITY REPORTS

Gonzolas distributed written reports.

Long commented that part of the Navigator settlement was that TWC would provide a report of consumer complaints on a quarterly basis, through calendar year 2008. He has not seen any reports. Zygielbaum asked if there are problems generating a report. Shrewsbury said that there are issues with trying to figure out how to categorize e-mails. They do attempt to summarize any big problems that come up. Long said that we should see how this goes, and possibly discuss this at the next meeting. He said that TWC could ask their customer service representatives to flag e-mail issues. Shrewsbury said that some people contact them by live chat.

ADJOURNMENT

Long moved adjournment, Jaeger seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Johnson, secretary